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ABSTRACT

Although psychologists have recently expressed interest in working for and with labor unions and their members, the relationship in the past has ranged from mutual indifference to open hostility. This traditional lack of interaction has created an information vacuum. Unions need to know that psychologists are not all alike, although they do all share a common goal of understanding, predicting, and assisting change in human behaviors. Four groups of psychologists offer services potentially useful to unions and their members. Clinical and/or health psychologists work with clients to understand and possibly change normal as well as abnormal behaviors. They use their understanding of human behavior to listen to and advise clients, and should be considered as potential providers of services to troubled employees and their families in such matters as substance abuse, job stress, family problems, absenteeism, or disturbances accompanying mental illness. Industrial/organization psychologist consultants can serve as consultants for quality of work life efforts, and can assist unions on internal organizational matters. Two other groups of psychologists, educators and researchers, are prepared to deliver high quality training and education programs for union staff as well as the rank and file members. Dialogue between unions and psychologists will take time, but with initiative on both sides, an exchange of mutually interesting and beneficial ideas is possible. (JAC)

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WHAT UNIONISTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PSYCHOLOGISTS

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During the last five to ten years a growing number of psychologists have expressed interest in working for and/or with unions and their members. Several psychologists, including the members of this panel, have systematically studied the history of relations between psychology and organized labor (e.g. Huszczo, Wiggins & Currie, 1984; Gordon & Burt, 1981). We have discovered small groups of psychologists actively working for unions and their members since the 1920's. We have also verified that these psychologists are relatively small in number and that organized labor has not generally welcomed them with open arms. In fact the "mutual indifference" between unions and psychologists has sometimes been a matter of open hostility. We discovered several good reasons why organized labor has been less than thrilled by psychologists' suggestions for closer ties including:

1. Some psychologists have worked for managements who were seeking assistance in avoiding unionization,
2. Psychological research and methodologies have been used by enemies of organized labor to weaken or combat unions,
3. Psychologists, in general, do not understand the inner workings of unions or even collective bargaining since it is not usually a part of their training nor of their experience, and
4. Psychologists are also associated with the stigma of mental illness.

The American Psychological Association formed a task force to assist psychologists interested in overcoming these barriers. Since coming into existence in 1981, the task force, primarily through publishing articles in psychological journals and through presentations at APA conventions, has identified a network of nearly 100 psychologists interested in assisting unions. We have heard from consultants, researchers and clinicians who have shared with us their experiences and interests in unions and their members.

We also sent surveys to 150 national and international unions headquartered in the U.S. to determine union perspectives on what needs psychologists could fulfill. It soon became clear that the traditional lack of interaction between psychologists and organized labor has created an information vacuum between the parties. Not only are psychologists guilty of not knowing about and understanding unions, but most unionists do not know much about professional psychologists. As a result, we petitioned the APA to hold today's session entitled "What Unions and Psychologists Should Know About Each Other". It is our hope that our relationship can build on such information exchanges.

My first reaction to this opportunity to explain to organized labor what psychologists are all about is to say that we are not all alike. Specifically, not all psychologists are "shrinks" nor are they all "union busters". There are approximately 100,000 psychologists in the United States, 65,000 of which belong to a professional association known as the American Psychological Association (APA). This Association is not a union, though discussion of collective bargaining arrangements for psychologists did take place within APA back in the 1930's and 40's (Finnison, 1979). Some psychologists belong to unions as a function of their place of employment (e.g. faculty members of unionized universities, psychological technicians in unionized state institutions) and a couple even hold staff positions in unions.

Most members of APA belong to one or more "divisions" or"interest groups". There are over 40 divisions within APA including clinical psychology, counseling psychology, health psychology, cousulting psychology and industrial-organizational psychology.

We all share, in some way or another, a common goal of understanding, predicting and/or assisting change in human behaviors. The extensive training of psychologists is monitored and regulated by the APA and by state licensing laws. It includes many years of higher education (typically four years at the

undergraduate level and five years at the graduate level) and results in a Ph.D. upon completion of research dissertation and internship requirements. Psychologists thus represent the largest number of doctorally trained behavior scientists. While psychiatrists are more likely to be located within 12 major states and mostly in urban areas, psychologists are located throughout the U.S., more closely distributed in proportion to the general population. We are a diverse group of people who generally do not fit the image the media presents of us -- a situation organized labor also finds itself in.

For the purpose of this paper, I would like to briefly discuss four groups of psychologists who seem to offer services potentially useful to unions and their members:

1. Clinical and/or Health Psychologists,
2. Industrial/Organizational Psychologist Consultants,
3. Psychologists who are educators, and
4. Psychologists who are researchers.

The largest single group of psychologists are known as "Clinical Psychologists". They and their colleagues in the related "Health Psychology" division number around 35,000 and are specialists in the use of nonphysical, nonchemical interventions for prevention and resolution of mental and nervous disorders. They work with clients to understand and possibly change "normal" as well as "abnormal" behaviors. Health Psychologists receive extensive training in testing and other diagnostic techniques and use a variety of methods to accomplish the so called "talking cure". They do not (nor cannot) prescribe medications. Instead, they use their understanding of human behavior to listen to and advise clients. While not always successful, research (e.g. Karon & Van den Bos, 1976; Smith & Glass, 1977) verifies an impressive track record.

Work related problems experienced by some unionized employees may have their roots in family problems, alcohol/substance abuse problems or even stress created by the job itself. One's work life affects one's family life and vice-versa. Stressed union members desiring professional help will want to rely on insurance benefits to cover the expenses. Clinical and Health Psychologists should be considered as potential providers of services to troubled union members and/or their families. Irv Bluestone, retired Vice-President of the United Auto Workers, presented the case for possible involvement of psychologists in the setting up of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP's) and the delivery of counseling services when he spoke at the APA national convention in 1975. Certainly some small but significant number of difficult grievances being handled by union representative are generated by troubled employees. The absenteeism or disturbances accompanying mental illness episodes must be responsibly dealt with, but 50% of individuals suffering "mental or nervous" episodes are treated by physicians who do not specialize in the treatment of mental conditions (Sargent & Wasserman, 1983). The medicinal treatment of the physical symptoms of stress problems without the development of a behavioral change plan to address the person's ability to cope with the stress must certainly increase the cost of health insurance. In fact, researchers (e.g. Casey, 1981) have documented an overall savings due to the medical cost offset of the inclusion of so-called "mental health benefit" provisions within health care insurance provided to workers. These savings are the result of the use of outpatient counseling sessions instead of more expensive use of hospitalization, lab services, and psychotropic medications. Furthermore the costs of outpatient counseling services varies with the laws of supply and demand. When psychologists as well as psychiatrists are included in the pool of eligible providers fees for counseling sessions are lowered. Frank's study verified that the 38 states that enacted laws mandating reimbursement of psychologists on the same basis as psychiatrists finds rates for sessions to be 9% lower. Unions interested in increasing

benefit coverage provided to their members without increasing the long-term costs of benefit packages negotiated with management are likely to be interested in such research. Dr. Jack Wiggins, a clinical psychologist who has devoted virtually his whole practice to the provision of mental health services to union members in the Cleveland area and a member of today's panel, has developed an informational packet for psychologists to assist unionists interested in preparing for negotiations to acquire mental health benefits for their membership. In addition, a comprehensive study of the trends of health benefits in general, and mental health benefits in particular, was recently conducted by GLS Associates, Inc. (Sargent & Wasserman, 1983) and is available through the APA.

A second group of psychologists I believe unionists should know about are organizational consultants; specifically those who have their doctorates in Industrial/Organizational psychology. Unions already know some things about this group -- unfortunately most of what they know is bad news. I/O psychologists are associated in the minds of most union leaders with some of the more exploitive features of management such as the paternalism of F. W. Taylor's Scientific Management, the pitting of union members against each other through an emphasis on the measurement of individual differences, and the use of "psychological warfare and manipulation" to thwart union organizing drives. I noted with interest Lagerfeld's recent (1981) article in the AFL-CIO's newspaper The Federationist on the use of "pop psychology" as a union busting technique. Perhaps it's wishful thinking on my part, but could this be a sign that unionists are separating the use of psychological theories and techniques by managers and consultants who receive brief exposure to the behavioral sciences during their business school education from the in-depth understanding of human behavior in the work setting accrued by I/O psychologists. I am not suggesting that no I/O psychologists are guilty of working against unions but

I am contending that many more managers and lawyers have parlayed their learnings from basic psychology courses into lucrative careers fighting organizing drives. These same learnings about psychological theories and techniques can be used in the development of organizing strategies for the union as well as management counter strategies.

Clearly, I/O psychologists are getting a second look from unions as the Quality of Work Life (or Employee Involvement or Labor-Management Cooperation or whatever you want to call it) movement continues to revolutionize the traditional approaches to labor relations in this country (see for example Nadler & Lawler, 1983). Quality of Work Life (QWL) efforts are collaborative problem-solving processes jointly instituted by union and management but separate from the collective bargaining contract. Workers and managers are allowed and/or encouraged to volunteer to participate in group sessions providing them with a forum for greater input and decision making power. The movement began in the early 70's as a means of involving the alienated worker who allegedly suffered from the "Blue Collar Blues". Irv Bluestone and a few other labor leaders saw the movement's potential for democratizing and humanizing the work place and championed its cause. In his address to the APA national convention in 1975, Bluestone described the role for psychologists as a third party consultant to these joint efforts. While not all unions support the QWL effort, hundreds of such joint processes are now fully established throughout the U.S.

Many I/O psychologists are now serving these processes as consultants. Perhaps the most notable is Michael Maccoby who was the chief consultant on the first successful joint union-management QWL effort at an auto parts factory in Tennessee (see Zwerdling, 1980 for a fascinating account of this experiment). Maccoby is now, among other things, the chief consultant to AT&T and the

Communication Workers of American in their efforts to establish a joint union-management process (see Maccoby, 1984). His fees are paid jointly by the union and management. I have also been occasionally paid by unions for consultation services on QWL efforts but know of no other psychologist so paid. More typically they are paid by management or through a special fund set up for the QWL effort. They are expected to remain a third-party neutral assisting the union and management with the QWL process. These psychologists/consultants report to a steering committee consisting of 50% union representatives and 50% management representatives partially in order to monitor their neutrality. We would like unions to know that psychologists are available and eager to continue to be used as consultants in these QWL efforts. They can check with their union brothers and sisters regarding the successful track record of several I/O psychologists in this area.

Psychologists can assist unions on internal organizational matters too. Union leader relations with his/her staff, selection of apprentices in compliance with EEO legislation and program development to increase member involvement in union activities are just some of the organizational elements that I/O psychologists can assist and have assisted unions on. Maccoby has even helped launch QWL groups within the CWA staff itself. Ross Stagner and James Martin have consultaed on negotiation problems. Mike Gordon and his associates at the University of Tennessee have helped unions plan the socialization of new members in a manner to promote long term high commitment. So despite the vile reputation typically associated with I/O psychology, some psychologists have been able to break through the barriers and work directly for and with some unions. Other unions should be made aware of this and should consider the utilization of the services of psychologists trained in organizational development techniques. Two recent research studies (Golembiewski, et. al., 1982 and Nicholas, 1982) verified the high rate of success OD has had in both public and private sector business organizations. OD can and will work to further

strengthen the effectiveness of unions as organizations if supported and utilized by union leaders.

There is considerable overlap between the last two groups of psychologists I want to bring to the attention of unionists; those being educators and researchers. Many psychologists teach in university settings and in addition others conduct workshops as private practitioners. I have noted with interest that seminars entitled "Psychology of Union Leadership" and "Psychology of Family Living" are offered at the UAW's education center on Black Lake in Michigan and at the AFL-CIO's education center in Silver Springs, Maryland. I have personally conducted over 50 psychology workshops for a variety of unions including the UAW, AFSCME, and some teachers unions. Sessions were always well attended and the evaluation forms filled out after sessions indicated that the unionists found them useful. Many psychologists are prepared to deliver high quality training and education programs on "Conflict Resolution Skills", "Stress Management", "Communication Skills", "Leadership", "Motivation", "Understanding Personalities", "Group Dynamics" and "Problem-Solving Skills". I might suggest, however, that unions interested in using psychologists to assist in plans to develop the skills and knowledge bases of their members, not only use psychologists as subject matter experts but as educators who will train union staff members to deliver these workshops effectively themselves. "Train the trainer" sessions could be built into the design of the delivery of the first set of workshops. This would allow people to be exposed to the material and provide a means to disseminate the information and approach to other groups within that union.

Psychologists receive considerable training in measurement and research. Unions may be interested in using our skills, tools, theories and data bases to help accomplish union goals. Four recent articles (Brett, 1980; Gordon & Nurick, 1981; Hammer, 1981; and Kochan, 1981) as well as an entire issue of the journal, International Review of Applied Psychology (Stagner, 1981a)

spell out in considerable detail research studies psychologists would like to conduct on unions as organizations, on union members, union leaders and union-management relationships. Unions and psychologists are likely to share interest in research on the impact on people of plant shutdowns and relocations, leadership styles of union officers, the development and maintenance of coalitions within unions, commitment to the union and to the company, participation by union members in decision making processes within their union and on their jobs, the behavioral foundations for decisions handed down by the National Labor Relations Board, the impact on the union of QWL/Labor-Management Cooperation projects, the development of a measure of the quality of union-management relations, trends in arbitration decisions and processes and many, many more topics. In fact, unionists may be suprised how much relevant research has already been published. (Psychologists may also be suprised.) Unions have been ripped off by psychologists as sources of data before and the very nature of the topics we are interested in may generate strong resistance to the use of our research services. If some trust can be developed between some psychologists and interested unionists, very useful research information and evaluations can be generated for unions and the field of psychology can be advanced at the same time. Behavioral scientists such as Strauss (1977) labelled the 50's and 60's as the "golden age" of psychological research on unions and union-management relations. A recent resurgance in research publications on thses topics has been documented (Huszczo, 1983) and many more psychologists have made it clear that they want to get involved this time. Stagner (1981a) has even called for a new area of psychology labelled "union psychology".

I have chosen to discuss four groups of psychologists during this paper presentation time entitled "What Unions Should Know About Psychologists". We are interested in sharing much more about our profession, our methods, our

association and our political and legislative goals. I am sure we would find a shared interest in many issues and values. Such dialogue will take time and we want unionists to know that a network of psychologists have emerged that are willing to put in that investment of time. The relationship between psychology and organized labor has had some high points but more than its share of low points. Change will require mutually interesting and beneficial ideas, some initiative on the part of both sides and a few friends to sanction the change effort. The end result will never be 100% support of unions by all psychologists nor total infatuation by labor in psychology. Psychologists have traditionally taken the path of least resistance and thus responded to the overtures of management and taken "no" as an answer from unions too quickly. Our "union network" invites representatives of organized labor to continue a dialogue. It seems to us that we have much to learn from each other.

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